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January 10, 2005

Sent via facsimile

John Graves
Bureau of Indian Affairs Phoenix Area Office
U.S. Department of Interior
P.O. Box 10
Phoenix, AZ 85001

RE: Current site conditions - Hecla Mining Company Apex Site (EPA ID No. UT982589848,
Docket No. RCRA-8-99-06)

Dear Mr. Graves:

Per our phone conversations this morning, and early this afternoon, this letter summarizes the current conditions and Hecla's activities to manage the site during the recent inclement weather.

As you are aware, the region has been subjected to very abnormal precipitation since early October. Our activities at site, since that time, have focused solely on managing the seepage and maintaining containment. In December and early January, we replaced the evaporation basins constructed last summer with two larger ones measuring 200 ft x 100 ft x 3 ft deep (each) and made provisions for installing two addition basins of similar size. The lining materials for the additional basins are on site. Further discussion of this work will be covered in our December progress report. The existing seepage collection ponds are pumped out periodically and the water transferred to the evaporation basins. Every Friday, before personnel leave the site, the seepage collection ponds are completely pumped out to provide adequate capacity should there be precipitation over the weekend. We have made arrangements for our earthwork contractor to maintain and run the pumps as conditions require, visit the site when our construction manager is unavailable, and keep him apprised of conditions so we can respond to them promptly.

I understand that there was a concern expressed recently by a third party that either the seepage collection ponds or evaporation basins were filling up. This concern is evidently not based on current information. On Friday afternoon, January 7th, the seepage collection ponds were pumped out and the available freeboard in the two evaporation basins was 18 inches and 24 inches respectively. The combined available containment capacity was about 570,000 gallons of water, or the equivalent of 3.6 inches of precipitation over the entire tailings impoundment.

Dave Jones, our construction manager, arrived in St. George at around 10:30 AM this morning, but road closures prevented him from going to the site. However, our contractor was on site at

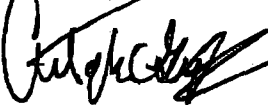
10-Jan-05, J. Graves - B/A
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8:00 AM this morning. The site was found in acceptable condition, and containment had been maintained. The seepage ponds were pumped out, the pump re-fueled and left running while they returned to St. George. Unfortunately, the highway bridge outside of Santa Clara was closed after the contractor returned to town. I spoke with Dave Jones shortly after noon today; he and the contractor will return to the site via the Beaver Dam route early tomorrow morning. Currently this route is also closed, due a traffic accident, but the highway patrol believes they will have the road open late this evening.

As long as this inclement weather persists our personnel and contractors will be on site, as frequently as necessary, to maintain control.

I hope this clarifies the situation. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to call me at (208) 769-4135 or e-mail at cgyp-ton@hecla-mining.com. I understand that you will forward this information to Chairman Rogers.

Sincerely,



Chris Gypton
Project Manager

Cc: John Galbavy, Esq. (HMC)
John Jacus, Esq. (DG&S)
Eric Johnson (USEPA, Region VIII)

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